

House Education & the Workforce Committee

John Boehner, Chairman

2181 Rayburn HOB • (202) 225-4527

ISSUE SUMMARY

H.R. 1 Promotes English Fluency

Ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, have the chance to succeed is a central purpose of the public education system. Unfortunately, many limited English proficient children face significant barriers to making the transition from their native language to English. The *No Child Left Behind* bill consolidates two federal programs, the Bilingual Education Act and the Emergency Immigrant Education program, to ensure that federal funding is focused on teaching English to limited English proficient children.

- Research has consistently shown that English language learners, when compared with their English-fluent peers, tend to receive lower grades and often score below the average on standardized math and reading assessments.
- Polls consistently show that nearly 80 percent of the American public supports requiring schools to instruct students primarily in English.
- In California, which recently ended its bilingual education program, test scores for English learners have increased dramatically statewide. After Californians enacted Proposition 227, which ended the state's bilingual education program, test scores in a school district near San Diego skyrocketed -- 7th graders improved their reading scores by 475 percent and math scores by 155 percent. Reading scores for all grades rose on average by more than 180 percent and math scores by 120 percent.
- H.R. 1 emphasizes flexibility, accountability, and parental choice. It focuses federal funding on teaching limited English proficient children how to speak English by holding states and local school districts accountable for ensuring that students are proficient in English after three years of attending school in the U.S.
- Moreover, the bill requires local school districts to obtain parental consent before placing children in an instructional program that is not taught primarily in English. Parents should be given the opportunity to give their consent before their children are placed in a class not taught primarily in English.
- It is unfair to force limited English proficient children to spend needless years of instruction in their native language and never achieve English fluency, a key factor in determining one's future success. H.R. 1 ensures that these children won't be left behind.